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ABSTRACT

Introducing children to theater and play production in the classroom setting can give a richness and energy to the quality of teaching. Play production can also be beneficial as a curriculum tool. When students participate in a project in an experiential way, learning is taking place. "Simon and the Woo" is an original play for children that can be easily performed by students. The play has seven characters, and the setting is an old hollow tree where one of the characters, Oliver Owl, lives. Oliver Owl is the narrator, and the play unfolds as one of the stories Oliver tells. The time of the play is just before Christmas, and "Santa" is one of the other characters. Children watching a play become engaged as an audience, and having them participate in the development of a play can teach them to appreciate the value of the art form. Students will best learn this through the organization of their teacher/director. (NKA)

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Simon and the Woo: Theatre can Develop Energy in the Classroom.

by Lorie A. Annarella

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Simon and the Woo

Theatre can Develop Energy in the Classroom

Introducing children to theatre and play production in the classroom setting can give a richness and energy to the quality of teaching. But energizing ones teaching is not the only plus of using play production in the classroom. Children enjoy watching plays because it can give them a sense of self-identification and validation of their role in life. And though there is importance and validity in exposing children to watching a play and becoming engaged as an audience, having students actively participate in the development of a play can teach them to appreciate the value of the art form from an experiential position.

Play production can also be beneficial as a classroom curriculum tool. The scripted play is a direct introduction for play production and theatre arts in which students participate. When students are engaged in a project in an experiential way, learning is taking place. High levels of energy must be expended in order to do the work required to produce a play. Students will best learn this through the organization of their teacher/director. When students are told that they will be performing a play, they will become engaged. It is up to the teacher/director to show them how to become engaged in an organized way so that the production will be a success. As teachers we can take the scripted play and turn it into a learning experience for our students. The following is a play that can be easily performed by students, which will enable them to participate in a theatre experience.

Cast of Characters

Oliver:	A large white owl. He is the story-teller.
Henrietta:	Girl elf. Toymaker for Santa.
Mortimer:	Boy elf. Toymaker for Santa.
Simon:	Boy elf. Toymaker for Santa.
Spidey:	Spider who protects the Woo. funny, scarey spider.
Woo:	The Wind. He is frightening and powerful.
Santa:	Himself

Scene

The scene is an old hollow tree where Oliver Owl lives. To the left of the tree is a sleigh that looks all rusted. Oliver Owl appears from a hole in the trunk of the tree and begins to speak to the audience.

Time

Sometime before Xmas.

SETTING: The scene is an old hollow tree where Oliver Owl lives. To the left of the tree is a sleigh that looks all rusted. Oliver Owl appears from a hole in the trunk of the tree and begins to speak to the audience.

OLIVER

Hello boys and girls. My name is Oliver Owl. All of my friends call me "Ollie", because it's short for Oliver. I guess it's just easier for people to say "Ollie", instead of Oliver. And really, I don't mind one bit. I kind of like being called "Ollie". I'm a very old owl. You can see some wrinkles in my feathers if you look closely. Because I'm old, many of my friends think that I'm wise. I believe they think I have a lot of wisdom. I like to believe that I have a lot of wisdom, too. It makes me feel important! But more than feeling important, I like to tell stories.

By: Lorie Annarella
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OLIVER (Continued)
I have been telling stories for ages. Today, I'm going to tell you a story of wind and rain and snow. This story happened long ago, in a place called "Snowplace Else". Snowplace Else is where Santa and his elves live and make toys all year 'round. It's at the North Pole. Now the only problem in Snowplace Else one particular year, was the problem of no snow. I'll tell you what; why don't you just snuggle-up into a nice comfortable feeling and I'll tell you the story of "Simon and the Woo". WHOO...WHOO... WHOO...

(Suddenly, thunder is heard and OLLIE puts up his umbrella)

OLIVER (Continued)
That's got to be the Woo, again. The Woo makes the wind, you know. He blows wind and rain and snow. For some reason, he is very upset, because he keeps blowing rain up here in Snowplace Else. Everyone is afraid of the Woo when he is upset, because he can be very fierce. Soon it will be Christmas, and Santa will have to make his yearly trip to deliver all the toys to the children. But without snow, I'm afraid Santa just won't be able to even move his sleigh off of the ground. Let's listen and see what is going on.

(Two elves are looking over Santa's sleigh.)

HENRIETTA
Oh Mortimer, what are we going to do? Santa is so upset. He tried to move the sleigh inside the workshop, but we all know that wouldn't stop the sleigh from rusting. As soon as we got it outside, it would start to rust all over again. This rain and thunder is awful! The rain makes me wet and the thunder hurts my ears.

MORTIMER
Why is the Woo doing this? I just don't understand. The Woo always brought us snow for Christmas - Magic Snow - so Santa's sleigh can fly. I just wish it would snow.

(Another loud clap of thunder is heard.)

HENRIETTA
There he goes again, bringing us more rain. We had better go inside and begin to work on some of the new toys for Christmas.

MORTIMER
I just don't feel in the mood to work on Christmas toys, when there isn't any snow. This is Snowplace Else, in the North Pole, and it's getting so close to Christmas and no snow! How awful!

(Another elf comes to look at the sleigh. He is a small elf and is wearing a funny hat. He has a bright rain jacket on. He also has a rather large frown on his face. He trips as he walks toward the other two elves.)

MORTIMER (Continued)
Let's ask Simon what he thinks about all this rain.

HENRIETTA
Oh, don't ask him. All he ever does is scowl and wear a frown on his face. He even trips over his own feet! No wonder everyone calls him "Simon, the silly sourpuss".

MORTIMER
But Henrietta, he does make such beautiful toys. Remember that pretty doll he made last Christmas? And that silver robot, with the glowing eyes? Why, Santa thought he did the best toy-making job of all of us.

HENRIETTA
But he still scowls and has the most dreadful personality. I don't care how many nice toys he makes, he still looks mean and silly to me. Why, he hardly ever talks to anyone. Listen to what he says when I ask him about the rusting sleigh.

(Pause)

HENRIETTA (Continued)
Simon, what do you think is wrong with the Woo? And why, do you think, is the Woo blowing rain instead of snow?

SIMON
I don't know. Do you know what's wrong with the Woo?

HENRIETTA
I asked you the question first!

SIMON
And I said, "I don't know". Do you know?

(As Simon is trying to look more closely at the sleigh, he suddenly bumps into Henrietta and knocks her over.)

HENRIETTA
Oh, you are so clumsy! Now I said I don't know. That's why I asked you.

SIMON
Gee, I'm sorry, Henrietta.

HENRIETTA
I told you, it's no use talking to him. He's just too sour. And too clumsy.

(Henrietta turns and goes into the workshop.)

MORTIMER
Isn't the sleigh terrible looking, Simon? With all that rust on it, Santa won't be able to lift off of the ground. With more rain, it will only rust more.

SIMON
The Woo must be upset. We must think of some way to make him stop bringing all of this rain.

(Suddenly, Simon takes center stage and shouts out:)

SIMON (Continued)
Rain, rain, go away;
Come again some other day.
We need Christmas Snow today!

MORTIMER
Do you really think that will help, Simon? I don't think the Woo likes poetry. But if you're right, Simon, and the Woo is upset, why don't you find out what would make the Woo happy again? Do you think that you can make someone as mean as the Woo happy, Simon? Well, maybe you can. You're a bit of a sourpuss yourself. Ha, Ha, Ha!

SIMON
Well, maybe I can and maybe I can't make the Woo happy again, but I'm going to see what I can do about it!

(Pause)

OLIVER
Well, I wonder if Simon will be able to do anything to make the Woo happy again, so that the Woo will blow snow, instead of rain? Simon will have to think very hard to solve this problem. The Woo can be fearsome, when he has a mind to be. I wonder what Simon is going to do?

(Another crack of thunder is heard and the wind begins to blow.)

OLIVER (Continued)
I had better head back to my tree house for now. Maybe we can find out just what plan Simon has for bringing snow to Snowplace Else and making the Woo happy, all at the same time.

(Simon is seen working at his bench, with hammer and nails and glue. We hear him talking aloud, as he is working.)

SIMON
How am I ever going to help Santa?

(Hammer, hammer, hammer)

SIMON (Continued)
This will really be a sad Christmas, if there are no presents for the boys and girls.

(Hammer, hammer, hammer)

SIMON (Continued)
And what are we going to do with all of these toys, if we can't deliver them for Christmas?

(Hammer, hammer, hammer. Simon crosses the workshop after hearing a loud clap of thunder and a "Woo....Woo...." sound. He gets an idea.)

SIMON (Continued)
There just has to be something wrong with the Woo. After all these years, he just can't not let it snow for Christmas. He knows how precious snow is to us this time of year. I wonder---I wonder if anyone has gone to ask him about it. There has to be a reason why he keeps blowing rain, instead of snow.

(More thunder is heard, as Henrietta and Mortimer appear. Then, they all hear the sound of jingle bells, as Santa comes in.)

SANTA
Ho, Ho, Ho, - no snow, no snow, no snow!

(Pause)

SANTA (Continued)
Well, here are my trusty elves. It is a sad day for me today, because it looks like there will not be any snow coming our way. If it doesn't soon snow, there will be no toys this Christmas. Try to think of something we can do. I just don't know the answer.

(As Santa leaves, shaking his head sadly, we hear "Ho, Ho, Ho, - no snow, no snow, no snow.")

MORTIMER
Santa is so sad. The weather is getting worse. I'll bet we are going to stop making all toys, until we get some snow. The way it is now, Santa doesn't know what to do with all the toys that are

MORTIMER (Continued)
made already. It looks like it's going to be a toyless Christmas, Henrietta.

HENRIETTA
There must be something that can be done. Can't you think of anything, Simon?

SIMON
I do have an idea, Henrietta, but first I must talk to the Woo.

HENRIETTA AND MORTIMER
Talk to the Woo!?

(Simon begins to hammer again and, suddenly hits his finger with the hammer.)

SIMON
Ouch! That really hurt!

HENRIETTA
That's about as silly a thing to say and do, as you are Simon. Silly, silly, silly Simon. Don't you know, nobody ever talks to the Woo!

SIMON
Well, I'm going to talk to the Woo. I have to find out what the problem is with the Woo, before I can solve it.

MORTIMER
When are you going to talk to the Woo, Simon?

SIMON
As soon as possible. As a matter of fact, I'm going to see him right now.

MORTIMER
Good luck, Simon. I hope that the Woo talks to you, and that no harm comes to you.

HENRIETTA
Even though you're silly, Simon, you are very brave. Good luck!

(Simon puts his rain jacket on and begins to leave. As he exits, another clap of thunder and a fearsome "Woo....Woo...." sound is heard. Henrietta and Mortimer are telling Simon "Goodbye" and wishing him "Good Luck")

OLIVER
Well, isn't that something! Simon is going to see the Woo. Can you imagine that? What do you think will happen? I don't know if I would have the courage to face the Woo; but Simon sure has the courage. I wonder what he'll say to the Woo? Well, I guess if you're going to try to solve a problem, you had better know what you're trying to solve. And there is only one way to find out---and that's to ask.

(The wind begins to blow loudly---
"Woo....Woo....Woo....")

OLIVER (Continued)
Let's watch and see what happens.

(We see Simon walking slowly toward the sound and the wind. There is a loud "Woo..." sound. The wind knocks Simon down. The "Woo...." sound becomes louder, as Simon picks himself up and goes on. As the wind calms, a large, ugly spider jumps down in front of Simon. Simon jumps back, quickly.)

SPIDEY
No one ever talks to the Woo. And if the powerful Woo finds you here, he will crush you with one blow! That is, if I don't get rid of you, myself.

(The thunder and wind begin again, as the Woo appears.)

WOO
Who dares to come and see me? I am the Woo---the wind. I can be a cooling breeze or I can be a wild hurricane! I can make wind and rain and snow. And I can destroy intruders with one blow.... blow....blow!!!!

SIMON
P l e a s e, Woo, I didn't mean to disturb you. My name is Simon. I'm one of Santa's elves. I help make toys for the boys and girls. Christmas toys, that is.

WOO
So, you're a toymaker, are you? Well, why aren't you in your shop, making toys for Santa to deliver on Christmas? "Woo....Woo.... Woo.... Spidey, get him to leave! I don't feel well, at all.

SPIDEY
All right, boss.

SIMON
No, please, Woo. I need to talk to you for just one minute.

WOO
Well....only for a minute. What do you want?

SIMON
There's a problem this year in Snowplace Else, Woo. We haven't been sent any snow, only rain. You usually blow nice magic snow in Snowplace Else, but this year you only sent us rain. Rain is very nice in the Springtime to help flowers grow, but in Winter, we need snow, magic snow.

WOO
I can't help it. All I can seem to blow is rain these days. Woo.... Go away and leave me alone! Woo....

SIMON
But Woo, Santa's sleigh has rusted from so much rain. It will never be able to lift off of the ground, unless there is magic snow. Already we have stopped making all toys. Can't you help us save Christmas? Tell me what is wrong?

WOO
I don't know. I'm so miserable. I guess all these years of blowing snow have just worn me out. I always feel in a bad mood. Nothing seems to make me happy, anymore.

SIMON
So you need something to make you feel happy again, do you, Woo? I have an idea. I'll see what I can do for you. I'll be back, but until I do, try to feel better and relax. Will you do that Woo?

(The Woo says nothing. Simon leaves and goes back to the workshop. He begins to work on a special gift for the Woo. Henrietta comes in to the workshop.)

HENRIETTA
Simon, you're back! Did the Woo hurt you? You were so brave to visit with the Woo. Did you learn anything that can help us?

SIMON
No, the Woo did not hurt me; and yes, I did learn something that will help.

HENRIETTA
Well, what did you learn?

SIMON
I'm going to make a gift for the Woo.

HENRIETTA
You're going to make a gift for him?! What would the Woo want with a gift? You really are silly, Simon!

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(Mortimer comes in and hears what Henrietta has just said to Simon.)

MORTIMER
Henrietta, you're not being very nice to Simon, talking that way. I'm glad you're not hurt, Simon. But, why are you making a gift for the Woo? I don't mean to be rude, Simon, but why would the Woo want a gift?

SIMON
Everyone likes gifts, Mortimer. And I think the gift that I'm making for the Woo will be just the kind of gift that will help him to bring us snow.

(The elves look surprised)

MORTIMER
A gift that will bring snow. Well, what do you know about that! It must be a magic gift that Simon is working on. I can't imagine what it is. What kind of gift would the wind like? Maybe it's a hat---no, it wouldn't be that. Maybe a coat? No. I can hardly wait to find out what kind of gift Simon is making for the Woo.

(Mortimer exits)

SIMON
There, all finished. Now all I have to do is give my gift to the Woo. I sure hope he likes it.

(Turns to the audience and asks:)

SIMON (Continued)
Do you think he'll like it? Wait, I had just better put a dab of paint here and some there for the finishing touches. Now, it's all finished. I hope this gift makes him feel better. I better hurry and take this to the Woo; it's almost Christmas Eve.

(Simon tucks the gift under his arm and begins traveling, as before, to see the Woo. As he approaches the cave of the Woo, he hears the Woo moaning a mournful sound. Woo.... Woo...)

SIMON (Continued)
Hello, Woo. Are you feeling any better, today?

WOO
No, I don't feel any better. What do you want this time, Simon? I'm not feeling too well. Woo....Woo....

SIMON
I don't want anything from you, Woo, but I brought a gift for you.

SIMON (Continued)
Perhaps it will make you feel better. And if you feel better, you might be interested in blowing some snow to Snowplace Else for Christmas.

WOO
Imagine that, Spidey! Simon brought a gift for me. Why didn't you ever make me a gift, Spidey?

(The Woo gives Spidey a shove.)

SPIDEY
Gee, boss, I didn't know you liked gifts.

SIMON
Well, if you never received a gift before, then it's about time that you did. I brought you a gift that I made myself. It's just for you. Would you like me to open it up for you?

WOO
Yes, Simon, open it for me. I'm so excited! Imagine, you made a gift for me.

(Simon opens the gift and holds it high into the air. The Woo begins to blow softly. As the Woo blows softly, the gift begins to make a very soothing sound.)

WOO (Continued)
What is this wonderful gift called, Simon? It is so beautiful, so colorful, and it makes the most soothing sound. As I blow on it, the sound becomes even more beautiful. Listen how it sings and plays and chimes.

SIMON
That's what I'll call my gift to you, Woo. I'll call it a Wind Chime, in honor of you. Whenever you feel sad or upset, just hold up the wind chime and listen to it's soothing sound and it will make you feel better.

WOO
Simon, you are so very kind. No one has ever been this kind to me. I have blown all over the earth. I have blown sweet breezes, strong wind, rain and snow, but no one has ever made me as happy as I am with this gift that you made for me. I feel so good, again. The wind chime has soothed me. Woo....Woo....Woo.... Go back to Snowplace Else. You will have all the magic snow you need for Christmas.

SIMON
Thank you, Woo. And enjoy your gift.

(The Woo and Spidey leave)

HENRIETTA
You are so wonderful, Simon. Mortimer and I were hiding behind that large rock, and we saw what you did for the Woo. I think what you did for the Woo and Snowplace Else was just splendid. And I'm sorry that I called you all of those names.

MORTIMER
I'm going to tell Santa right away, Simon. You did a courageous and kind deed. You helped give us snow for Christmas.

(Just then Santa comes to greet Simon)

SANTA
Ho, Ho, Ho, Simon. Henrietta and Mortimer told me about the gift you gave to the Woo. I want you to know that I am very proud of you. If the wind chime soothes the Woo, perhaps we can make more of them as gifts and soothe others as well. Anyway, Simon, thank you. You are now going to be the chief toymaker and giftmaker here at Snowplace Else.

(As Santa pats Simon on the back, the wind chime is heard and it begins to snow. Santa looks up, leaves the stage and is heard saying:)

SANTA (Continued)
Ho, Ho, Ho....Snow....Snow....Snow....

(All of the elves follow Santa.)

OLIVER
Now you know the story of how and why the first wind chime was invented. I must say, I find that story rather interesting, myself. Simon did a very courageous and kind deed for the Woo, by being kind to someone he was afraid of.

(Oliver yawns.)

OLIVER (Continued)
It's just about time for this owl to say good-night. It's getting rather late, you know. I think I'll just hang my wind chime out, so that I can hear it play while I'm resting. It does make the most soothing sort of music, doesn't it? Well, good-night boys and girls. Till I see you next time, stay warm and Merry Christmas!

END OF PLAY